

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 13, 2016

- ✓ **2 Chron. 31:1-32:33.** Reestablishment of proper worship (31); Sennacherib’s invasion (32).
- ✓ **1 John 2:15-17.** Fellowship with God or the world?
- ✓ **Psalms 104:16-35.** The glory of God diffused throughout all of creation.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 31:1-32:33. This section begins with reform: *“Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars-- from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh-- until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession”* (31:1). Before the people returned home, they destroyed the pagan cult items in the towns of Judah and Benjamin and also in Ephraim and Manasseh. After this cleansing, arrangements had to be made for the collection and storage of tithes and offerings for the support of the priests and Levites. The rest of chapter 31 pertains to these matters. Note the commendation of Hezekiah’s wholeheartedness before the Lord in verse 21 and the results: *“to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.”* Believers always prosper when they follow the Lord wholeheartedly (not conduit formulas), they prosper in their souls because they prosper at a life lived in and with God regardless of any temporal matters. It may or may not be God’s will for us to prosper financially or in health. However, it is always His will for us to prosper in the spiritual life, in Him. The prudent man understands the dangers of having more prosperity or good things on the outside than on the inside. Consider the wisdom of John’s prayer in 3 John 1:2: *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as (καθὼς) your soul prospers.”* Chapter 32 records the invasion of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. Archaeological discoveries have uncovered Sennacherib’s annals, where he notes that he conquered forty-six Judahite cities. He “thought” he would take Jerusalem, but he failed to do so. In 32:2-4 we can see that it is no denial of one’s trust in God if one makes certain precautionary preparations. “Pray to God and keep your powder dry” is a wise response in the face of danger at any time. This is in perfect keeping with concurrentism. Blocking off the water from the springs outside the city was a *prudent* defensive measure because a plentiful water supply made the task of invaders easier. The countermeasures taken by Hezekiah were threefold. He had to care for the water problem, both from a defensive and offensive point of view. Then he had to repair weak spots in the wall, erect towers, construct an outside wall, and build up the Millo, that is, “the supporting terraces” as David and Solomon once had done. There is good archaeological evidence of considerable wall-building activity in Jerusalem during this period. Note Sennacherib’s asperity and foolish taunts. Sennacherib’s message was typical of those who place their faith in human power rather than in the invisible power of God. Like many such people, he considered faith in the living God to be the same as all “religion,” and he mocked the reforms of Hezekiah as meaningless in the face of the power of the sword he carried. There is great irony in these verses. Whereas Sennacherib is engaging in psychological warfare, he is doing so by quoting truths thinking they are lies. The phrase “the Lord our God will save us from the King of Assyria” is truth, but Sennacherib quoted it as if it were an impossibility. The problem for Sennacherib was that he had never confronted the One true God, Yahweh, the God of Israel. When he did, he returned

defeated and disgraced as per 32:21. Hezekiah responded to human threats with prayer to God. This is a fulfillment of 2 Chron. 7:14, where God's people in trouble are told to pray and seek His face. God answered the prayer by sending the Angel who annihilated all of the fighting men and leaders and officers of the camp of the Assyrian king. Sennacherib withdrew in disgrace and returned to Assyria, where he met his death at the hands of plotting sons. Of course, verse 31 is a figure of speech for God knows all things in us, as we have studied in classical theology. God merely permitted the testing from this broken, sinful, and benighted world.

1 John 2:15-17. Note the warning: *Do not love the world or anything in the world.* The “world” (κόσμον), thought of here as an entity hostile to God (cf. 4:4), is always a seductive influence which Christians should continually resist. In other passages the same word “world” (κόσμον) means people as per John 3:16–17, indicating that one does not obtain the meaning primarily by word study methodology (Cratylean exegesis). The world competes for the love of Christians, and one cannot both love it and the Father at the same time. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (Matt. 6:24). As James also had told his Christian readers, “Friendship with the world is hatred toward God” (James 4:4). The reason John gives that love for the world is incompatible with love for God is that everything in the world comes not from the Father but from the world. The world thus conceived is a system of values and goals from which God is excluded. In describing “everything in the world,” John specified its contents under three well-known phrases that effectively highlight the world's false outlook. Men of the world live for the cravings of sinful man. “Cravings” translates ἐπιθυμία, which is used twice in this verse and once in the next verse. In the New Testament the word usually, though not always, connotes desires that are sinful. The expression “sinful man” translates the Greek σαρκὸς (“flesh”). The phrase refers particularly to illicit bodily appetites. The expression the “lust (ἐπιθυμία) of his eyes” points to man's covetous and acquisitive nature. The boasting of what he has and does signifies a proud and ostentatious way of life. Christians ought to have nothing to do with such worldly perspectives as these. In verse 17, John tells us that the world and its desires are temporary and pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. The word “lives” points to “abiding life” of fellowship with God. The idea here is that a life lived in God's fellowship is one that rejects the sinful things of this passing world, and is a life that has no real ending. A person whose character and personality are shaped by obedience to God will not be affected by the passing away of the world and its vain desires. It is a Johannine way of saying, “Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.” A life that is lived for anything temporal cannot live in fellowship with God regardless of what conduit system one constructs. The very idea of living for the world belies the essence of the Christian life, a life of living, thriving, and growing in God *by knowledge and by love.*

Psalm 104:16-35. The believer who is a metaphysical biblical realist can really appreciate God as *Esse* who gives all things their acts of existence with all of their properties every instant as illustrated throughout this section. He looks at the world about him and lifts his heart in spontaneous praise, rejoicing in the evidence, and the glory, of the Lord. The biblical metaphysician can *richly* enjoy the beauties, order, and wonder of all of creation as God's presence is manifest in the teeming world He made, sustains, and superintends. Between opening and closing worship, the poet remembers, quotes, observes, and appreciates, with great perceptiveness and pleasure that God is in all things as the efficient cause of all that is. Everywhere is beauty, order, wisdom, life, variety, provision, satisfaction, dependence—all flowing from God. All one has to do is open one's "spiritual/metaphysical eyes." What a sight!

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don